



# Battlemind Training II

## Continuing the Transition Home

Training Timeframe: 3-6 months after deployment  
(Reconstitution)

\*See Notes Pages for Briefing Instructions

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**This training was developed by Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. This module is designed to be administered at 3-6 months post-deployment as part of the PDHRA. Note that there is also a phase I training designed to be given immediately at redeployment, but the present training can be given as stand alone training. Please send comments, suggestions, or questions to POC: LTC Carl A. Castro (301-319-9174). [carl.castro@us.army.mil](mailto:carl.castro@us.army.mil). -Version2.0 16NOV05**

[NOTE TO TRAINER: The Trainer should ideally have deployment experience to either Iraq or Afghanistan and use their experience to reinforce the key points. The speaker notes provide points to be covered for each slide, but should NOT be read verbatim to the Soldiers. Use the questions contained in the speaker notes to involve Soldiers in the training and to encourage them to share their own experiences. **Ideally the training should be given in platoon size units, so as to facilitate discussion.**]

During this brief we are going to talk about Battlemind, and how it relates to your continuing transition home. Some of you may have received similar training when you returned home. The training today builds on that training, but this training is extremely useful even if you didn't receive the previous training.

Before I begin, let me ask you questions:

- How many of you have deployed to Iraq? Afghanistan?
- How many of you have deployed more than once?
- How many of you are married? Have children?
- Where are my NCOs? Where are the team leaders? Where are the squad leaders?

I want to begin by saying that these skills and the findings that I am going to present are based on 1000's of surveys and interviews from Soldiers who have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. This is what they have told us. If you have had different experiences, please share them with each other and the group.



## Battlemind



**Battlemind** is the Soldier's inner strength to face fear and adversity in combat with courage.

Key components include:

- Self-confidence
  - Take calculated risks
  - Handle challenges
- Mental toughness
  - Overcome obstacles or setbacks
  - Maintain positive thoughts during times of adversity and challenge

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[Note to Briefer: The term "Battlemind" was coined by General Crosbie Saint, when he was Commanding General, U.S. Army Europe, to train his battalion commanders how to develop the warrior ethos in Soldiers that they would be leading into combat.]

Battlemind is the Soldier's inner strength to face fear and adversity in combat, with courage. Battlemind training focuses on building on your proven strengths.

Battlemind is what helped get you through your deployment. It is what makes you an effective U.S. Soldier. The development of Battlemind begins the day you entered the military and continues to the day you leave active duty. Indeed, your battlemind will always be with you.

Battlemind consists of two critical components: Self confidence and mental toughness.

How you think about something impacts how you feel about it, and this determines how you will react or behave. All of you who deployed have proven that you have these skills. Battlemind training will provide you a perspective on how to maximize your Battlemind skills you demonstrated in combat so that you can use them as you continue your transition home. We will discuss how to adapt these Battlemind skills so that they are just as effective at home as they were in combat.



## Combat Skills You All Possess



Battlemind skills helped you survive in combat, but may cause you problems if not adapted when you get home.

**Buddies (cohesion) vs.** Withdrawal  
**Accountability vs.** Controlling  
**Targeted Aggression vs.** Inappropriate Aggression  
**Tactical Awareness vs.** Hypervigilance  
**Lethally Armed vs.** “Locked and Loaded” at Home  
**Emotional Control vs.** Anger/Detachment  
**Mission Operational Security (OPSEC) vs.** Secretiveness  
**Individual Responsibility vs.** Guilt  
**Non-Defensive (combat) Driving vs.** Aggressive Driving  
**Discipline and Ordering vs.** Conflict

**Battlemind Checks** allow Soldiers and their Buddies to identify if and when help is needed.

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We have taken the word Battlemind, and have used each letter to denote a combat skill that has to be modified to facilitate your transition home. This list only comprises a subset of your combat skills. However, this is the subset of skills that we will focus on today.

We are going to focus on your strengths. However, we want to make sure that we don't let your proven strengths become a weakness.

The key point is that if you used the same battlemind-set that you had in combat when you get home you may have experienced some problems.

Soldiers frequently let how they were thinking and reacting in combat affect how they are thinking and reacting back home. If you do, then negative things can happen. And if you are still thinking and behaving, now that you are home, the same way you thought and behaved in combat, then these are indicators that you might need some help.

As we go through each one of these Battlemind skills, I am going to provide you some indicators, some azimuth checks, Battlemind checks if you will, that I want you to look out for in yourself and in your buddy that might indicate that either you or your buddy needs some help.

I am also going to ask you throughout this presentation to share your own deployment and transition experiences. The idea is that you all can learn from each other as well, and help each other as you continue your transition home.



## Buddies (Cohesion) vs. Withdrawal



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**In Combat:** No one understands your experience except your buddies who were there.

**At Home:** May prefer to be with battle buddies rather than with spouse, family, or other friends. May avoid speaking about yourself to friends and family.

**Question:** *When you first returned from combat, did you notice that your relationships with your family and friends had changed?*

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**[Note to briefer: For each of the battlemind skills, there are two slides. The first slide is used to define the skill and ask a question which we want Soldiers to endorse to stimulate discussion. Most importantly the briefer needs to NORMALIZE the responses that Soldiers give. The briefer can ask the question on the slide or ask "How many of you .... ?" Then say that this is very common and normal and that other Soldiers also report these experiences. It is very important to validate and normalize positive responses that Soldiers give. The second slide for each skill also has questions, but these are NOT intended for Soldiers to endorse in front of others in the group.]**

[Notes in brackets [ ] are information for the briefer.]

For many of you, the bonds you made with your fellow Soldiers in war may last the rest of your life. For some of you, these bonds may feel stronger and more important to you than any other relationships in your life.

At home, Soldiers often report that they feel closer to their battle buddies than their family and they may not want to be around other Soldiers who have not deployed because you believe that they can't understand you or your experiences.

[Follow-up Questions can also be asked: What way have these relationships changed? You are different. If you have young kids, they are different. Your spouse may have become more independent during the deployment, she was control of the house. This is exactly what the Army wants all military spouses to be, confident and independent. The Army wants military spouses to be able to function completely independent of the Soldier so when you deploy again or are gone on long training exercises, your family will be fine. This makes sense right? However, how has this changed your relationship with your spouse?]



## Buddies (Cohesion) vs. Withdrawal



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### Transitioning the Combat Skill

*Cohesion: Combat results in bonds with fellow Soldiers that will last a lifetime; back home, your friends and family have changed, re-establishing these bonds takes time and work.*

### Battlemind Check (self & buddy)

- Felt close to buddies over there but now feel alone?
- Not connecting with loved ones?

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**[Note to briefer: The Battlemind Check questions are for the Soldier to think about privately. Unlike the previous italicized questions, the Battlemind Check questions are NOT intended for Soldiers to share their responses to the group, but for them to consider if they apply to themselves or their buddies. If a Soldier does share their response to the group, address the Soldier's response without further singling them out. You may want to talk to the Soldier individually after the training.]**

**[Key concept:]** Re-establishing relationships takes time, and if you or a buddy feel isolated and alone 3-6 months post-deployment you may need help.

It is important to recognize that renewing relationships at home takes time.

If by this time you are still feeling isolated and alone and not connecting with loved ones, this may be a sign that you should get help.

**Other things that Soldiers can also do include:** Renew relationships at home. Spend individual time with each of your loved ones; balance time spent with buddies and family. Provide and accept support from them. Re-integration takes time.



## Accountability vs. Controlling



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**In Combat:** Maintaining control of weapon and gear is necessary for survival.

**At Home:** Become angry when someone moves or messes with your stuff, even if insignificant. Nobody cares about doing things right except for you.

**Question:** *Since coming home have you been able to let go, relax, and let someone else be in control?*

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Soldiers returning from combat continue to feel the need to remain in control. This includes knowing where all of your personal possessions are, and being reluctant to let others make decisions that affect you. For example, when a family member or a roommate moves something of yours, you may overreact, just as you would in a combat environment if you were unable to find a critical (or even insignificant) piece of gear or personal item.

These types of reactions are very common.



## Accountability vs. Controlling



### B Transitioning the Combat Skill

**A** Accountability: *Back home, the small details are no longer important; family decisions and personal space are best shared.*

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### **Battlemind Check (self & buddy)**

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- Overreacting to minor events?
  - Still having trouble letting family and friends share in making decisions?
  - Trying to control things that don't really matter?

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**[Key Concept:]** Soldiers who experience ongoing conflict with family members or friends about decisions, and who continue to over-react to minor events may need help.

**Other things Soldiers can do:** Distinguish between what is and isn't important. Relinquishing control at home does not place you at risk. Don't be afraid to apologize when you overreact. Apologizing, especially to your spouse or significant other, is not a sign of weakness.

For those of you who are married or in a relationship, how many of you have apologized for something that you didn't think you needed to apologize for? Why did you do this? [to keep the peace]. Apologizing, especially to your spouse or significant other, is a sign of strength of character, not a weakness.



## Targeted vs. Inappropriate Aggression



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**In Combat:** Targeted aggression involves making split second decisions that are lethal in a highly ambiguous environment, which keeps you and your buddies alive.

**At Home:** Overreact to minor insults. Inappropriate aggression, assault, spouse abuse, snapping at the kids or buddies or your NCO.

**Question:** *After returning home, were you easily irritated: yelling, throwing things or threatening someone?*

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It is very common after returning from combat for Soldiers to be angry. This can be very broad, involving anger toward the enemy, events that happened in combat, the Army, their leadership, deployment policies, stop loss, and various minor things (such as coming to this brief). How many of you have noticed that your tolerance level to little things has gotten less?

In combat, split-second decision making involving aggressive acts is important – it kept you alive and your buddies alive. You don't want to do this at home though.

Aggressive acts at home are called assault, spouse abuse or insubordination, if directed toward a senior NCO or officer. Right?





## Targeted vs. Inappropriate Aggression



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### Transitioning the Combat Skill

Targeted Aggressiveness: *In combat, the enemy is the target; back home, there are no enemies.*

### Battlemind Check (self & buddy)

- Still snapping at your spouse, kids or buddies?
- Getting into fights or heated arguments?
- Avoiding people?

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**[Key Concept]:** If you or your buddy are experiencing inappropriate levels of aggression or anger you or your buddy may need help.

Combat anger involves making the appropriate response in the appropriate situation. So you have the skill, you know how to respond appropriately in very ambiguous and dangerous situations.

How many of you over react now to little things? You need to realize this, and check yourself. Have you stopped a buddy from getting into a fight? It is important to look out for each other and not encourage each other to fight.

One Soldier wrote inside his hat, "It's not always about me, and it's not always that important." Think about that. In combat, everything is split-second. Most places where you'll be back home, you don't have to make an immediate decision, nor do you have to respond immediately.

**Other Actions Soldiers can take include :** Assess whether there is a real threat to your safety. Think before you act. Count to 10. Walk away. Talk to someone – get an azimuth check. Look out for each other and don't encourage each other to get in fights.



## Tactical Awareness vs. Hypervigilance



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**In Combat:** Survival depends on being aware at all times of your surroundings and reacting immediately to sudden changes.

**At Home:** You may feel keyed up or anxious.

**Questions:**

*When you returned home were you easily startled by loud noises?*

*Did you have trouble sleeping or have nightmares?*

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Once you returned you may have noticed that you became anxious and alert in large groups of people, which may have happened at unexpected times like in the grocery store, the mall, or church. You start looking for exits as soon as you enter a room. You may be suspicious of others, especially Arab looking folks. "Has anyone noticed this happening to you since you been back?" How many of you have felt anxious or revved up in situations that you later realized were not threatening at all?

These are all very common reactions after coming home from combat.

Vignette: One Soldier told us that a tire blew out in front of him on a 18 wheeler and he broke into a sweat, thinking he was under attack, until he realized he was back home in the States. This type of reaction is common, and normal.

We hear from a lot of Soldiers that they can't sleep, that they have nightmares.

These are all common reactions after returning home from combat.



## Tactical Awareness vs. Hypervigilance



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### Transitioning the Combat Skill

Tactical Awareness: *Combat requires alertness and sustained attention; back home it takes time to learn to relax.*

### Battlemind Check (self & buddy)

- Still jumping at loud noises...staying revved up?
- Still have trouble with sleep or nightmares?
- Drinking to calm down or to help you sleep?

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**[Key Concept:]** If you or your buddy are still hyper-alert, easily revved up, and continuing to have difficulty sleeping you may need to get help.

If you can learn to be alert and aware when the situation demands it, like when you were in the combat zone, then I know that you learn to relax and be at ease when the threat is low.

Find healthy ways to calm yourself. Engage in regular exercise and pay close attention to cues from your body.

If you are having difficulty sleeping, do NOT self-medicate with drugs or alcohol to feel calmer or to help you sleep. Alcohol and drugs may initially seem to help you sleep, but in the long run will make your sleeping much worse.

Monitor yourself for revved-up reactions to minor events. Engage in regular exercise. Don't drink large amounts of alcohol or take illegal drugs to fall asleep.



## Lethally Armed vs. “Locked and Loaded” at Home



B **In Combat:** Carrying your weapon at all times  
A was mandatory and necessary.  
T

T **At Home:** Need to have weapons on you, in  
L your home and/or car at all times, believing  
E that you and your loved ones are not safe  
M without them.  
I

N **Question:** *When you first came back, did you*  
D *feel the need to remain armed?*

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In combat you were armed to the teeth. You had your weapon with you at all times, some of you used crew served weapons and grenade launchers.

At home many of you may have had a desire to continue to remain armed. You may want to have weapons with you at home, in your car, in your office, and some of you may even want to continue to carry weapons. You may want to have a gun, a knife, nunchakus, brass knuckles, billy clubs. These desires are common, but must be resisted.



## Lethally Armed vs. “Locked and Loaded” at Home



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### Transitioning the Combat Skill

Armed: *In combat, it's dangerous to be unarmed; at home, it's dangerous to be armed.*

### Battlemind Check (self & buddy)

- Threatened someone with a weapon?
- Carry a loaded weapon in your car?
- Keep an unsecured loaded weapon at home?

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**[Key concept:** Inappropriate use of weapons is unacceptable. If you threaten someone with a weapon, or not follow good weapon safety, or continue to have the desire to have a weapon “locked and loaded”, you need to get help. These are NOT normal reactions following combat.

When you were in combat, I know two things for certain. You followed weapons safety rules and the ROE very carefully. So you have the skill to safely handle and use weapons. So be safe back here!

Follow all laws and safety precautions regarding weapons. Never drive with a loaded weapon. Never use a weapon to threaten or intimidate loved ones.

If you plan to keep a weapon(s), be mindful of your family's concerns. Talk about your choices, and listen to your spouse and their level of comfort around weapons.



## Emotional Control vs. Anger/Detachment



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**In Combat:** Controlling your emotions during combat is critical for mission success.

**At Home:** Failing to display emotions, or only showing anger, around family and friends will hurt your relationships. You may be seen as detached or uncaring.

**Question:** *When you returned did you notice you were less patient, less tolerant, more likely to get ticked off?*

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Combat is about thinking, not letting your emotions influence your decisions. Keeping in control of your emotions is critical for mission success. It insures good tactical decision making.

However, how do you think you will be perceived at home if you fail to display emotions? [typical answers you may get include “detached”, “uncaring”] That’s right, your family and friends will think that you don’t care or your detached.

One emotion that many Soldiers are very adept at showing when they return from combat is Anger. After returning from war, Soldiers tend to be angry and pissed off.

Soldiers often tell us that they feel either detached or angry. The key is to recognize that this is common, but that there are other emotions that are important.



## Emotional Control vs. Anger/Detachment



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### Transitioning the Combat Skill

Emotional Control: *In combat, controlling emotions is necessary; at home, limiting your emotions leads to relationship failures.*

### **E** Battlemind Check (self & buddy)

- Can only show anger or detachment?
- Feeling numb?
- Friends & loved ones tell you that you have changed?
- Having relationship problems?

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**[Key Concept]:** It takes time after coming back from combat to feel comfortable expressing a range of emotions. If detachment and anger are the only emotions that you can show 3-6 months post-deployment, then you may need to get some help. Continued anger, numbness, and relationship problems 3-6 months post-deployment are signs to get help.

View emotional control as both holding in and expressing your feelings. Controlling your emotions involves both aspects, showing and holding in, it is not just holding in.

Showing emotions is important for sustaining personal relationships. Displaying emotions is not unmilitary and doesn't mean you are weak.

If you know that you do not like to display emotions, then you need to articulate them verbally. If you are angry or pleased, just say it "That really pisses me off" or "that makes me happy". You've got to say it. You have to communicate it somehow.

If your emotional repertoire is only "I'm very angry" or "I don't want to talk to you" then you may need some help.



## Mission OPSEC vs. Secretiveness



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**In Combat:** Talk about mission only with those who need to know. Can only talk about combat experiences with unit members.

**At Home:** Soldiers may avoid sharing their deployment experiences with spouse or significant other.

**Question:** *When you returned home did you feel like others who hadn't been there couldn't understand what you'd been through?*

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One of the first things you learn in the military is you only tell people information that they need to know. Lots of us use that to avoid telling others things. To blow people off, we tell them, "You don't have a need to know." Some of you only feel you can talk to those who have been there, done that.

How many of you have been asked about your deployment experiences? What did they ask you? They usually ask, "How was it? Did you kill anyone?" What was your response? Did this make you angry?

It is normal to avoid sharing gruesome details about combat experiences with spouse or significant others. Common reasons "nobody else would understand" and explaining it is not necessary because they don't have a need to know.





## Mission OPSEC vs. Secretiveness



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### Transitioning the Combat Skill

OPSEC: *The “need to know” now includes friends and family.*

### Battlemind Check (self & buddy)

- Haven't shared your deployment experiences with those closest to you?
- Get angry when someone asks you about your deployment experiences?

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**[Key concept:** Realize that your family has a need to know something about your experiences while deployed. But you need to tell your story in the way you want to tell it. You may feel very uncomfortable telling family and friends what happened while deployed, but you need to find a way to tell something about your deployment, to the degree that you are comfortable.

Recognize that your family and friends want to know about your experiences but may be afraid to ask, or not really want too many details even though they ask, or act indifferent when you tell your story. It's your story, tell it the way you want to tell it.

Share with your significant other what you're doing, day to day. Be proud of your service.

When someone asks you about your deployment experiences, have two answers prepared: a short answer and long answer. Use your short answer for those that you really don't want to share your experiences with. It is polite to say something. Use your long answer for those that you really want to share your experiences with.

The key is to be proud of your service and your accomplishments while you were deployed. Tell your story.



## Individual Responsibility vs. Guilt



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**In Combat:** Your responsibility is to survive and do your best to keep your buddies alive.

**At Home:** You may feel you have failed your buddies if they were killed or seriously injured. You may be bothered by memories of those wounded or killed.

**Question:** *Did you second guess decisions you made while you were deployed?*

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Responsibility involves surviving the chaos of the war-zone, never leaving a buddy behind, and doing what you can to help others.

You may believe that you could have changed what happened or blame yourself, your leadership, the lack of proper equipment etc. You may feel enraged and unable to direct that anger to anyone or anything in particular now that you are home.

There is a great deal of luck surviving combat, as you all know. You don't know when the IED or VBIED will happen.

With the info you had at the time, would you make the same decision? It's easy in hind sight to second guess your decisions or the decisions of others.



## Individual Responsibility vs. Guilt



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### Transitioning the Combat Skill

Responsibility: *In the “heat of battle,” Soldiers must act—they must make life and death decisions. Later, it’s learning from these decisions...without second guessing.*

### Battlemind Check (self & buddy)

- Certain memories of the deployment keep bothering you?
- Still feeling guilt about things that happened in combat?

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**[Key concept]:** If you are still feeling a lot of guilt about what happened during deployment or having strong memories that keep bothering you, you may need to get some help.

Recognize that there are human limits to preventing death and injuries. Don’t allow your survival guilt to destroy you. Your buddy would want you to drive on.

Casualties occur in war time, accidents happen, good people die. Innocent people die.

Be aware of becoming preoccupied with the health and safety of loved one’s and watch for inappropriate controlling behaviors (not letting your spouse go out alone, keeping your kids from their usual routines, calling to check up on loved ones incessantly).

Nothing to be ashamed of if you survive. Nothing to be guilty of if you survive.

You’re all heroes, you have made sacrifices. Those who didn’t make it back made the ultimate sacrifice. If there is anyone of you having guilt, if you could have gone back to the day before your buddy died and he said what if I died would you want me to drive on? He’d say yes.



## Non-Defensive (Combat) vs. Aggressive Driving



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**In Combat:** Unpredictable, fast, rapid lane changes, straddling the middle line, keeping other vehicles at a distance, designed to avoid IEDs and VBIEDs.

**At Home:** Aggressive driving leads to speeding tickets, accidents, fatalities.

**Question:** *When you returned, did you find yourself having the urge to drive fast?*

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Combat driving, how many of you were drivers in theater? What kind of moves did you use in theater that may get you in trouble at home on the interstate? [Typical responses include: driving fast, ramming other vehicles, weaving, driving in the center line.]

Back home, we call driving fast, making rapid lane changes, without signaling, cutting people off, reckless driving. And you can get tickets for this type of driving.

After every war, accident rates go up because Soldiers by driving too fast or recklessly or under the influence of alcohol. This may involve seeking an adrenaline rush, anger, road rage, or overreacting to perceived dangers.



## Non-Defensive (Combat) vs. Aggressive Driving



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### Transitioning the Combat Skill

Combat Driving: *In combat, driving fast is necessary to avoid danger; back home, driving fast 'feels right,' but is dangerous.*

### Battlemind Check (self & buddy)

- Chasing adrenaline highs by driving fast?
- Involved in driving accidents?
- Easily angered while driving?

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**[Key concept]:** We don't want you to become a casualty after you've survived the war zone. Shift from offensive driving to defensive driving. Obey traffic laws. Use turn signals. Slow down.

Adapt those skills, but take it from being offensive to doing what you learned in driver's education, defensive driving.

Realize the relative safety of roads at home, pay attention and assess threat and danger accurately. Be aware that you may have strong automatic startle responses to bridges, roadside debris, etc. and a very low tolerance for "bad drivers" and traffic.



## Discipline & Ordering vs. Conflict



**B** **In Combat:** Survival depends on discipline and  
**A** obeying orders.

**T**  
**T** **At Home:** Inflexible interactions (ordering and  
**L** demanding behaviors) with your spouse,  
**E** children, and friends often lead to conflict.

**M**  
**I** **Question:** *When you returned, did you tell family*  
**N** *members and friends what to do instead of*  
**D** *discussing options with them?*

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When an NCO or officer gives an order, we follow it, right? We don't say "well, I don't know if it's a good idea, or I don't feel like doing it". We follow that order. But if you stay in that same frame of mind and come home and expect your spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, or kids to follow orders, that will get you into trouble.

Nobody likes following orders.



## Discipline & Ordering vs. Conflict



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### Transitioning the Combat Skill

Discipline & Ordering: *Giving and following orders involves a clear chain of command, which does not exist within families.*

### Battlemind Check (self & buddy)

- Relationships aren't going well?
- Ongoing conflicts over decisions?

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**[Key concept]:** Ordering people around leads to conflict. We are talking about triggers that can lead to relationship problems. Just remember, no one likes to take orders. If relationships aren't going well or you have ongoing conflicts, consider getting some help.

You give orders on the battlefield - at home you ask, request, suggest, etc actions that you want done.

Continue to acknowledge that friends and family members have been successful while you have been gone and may have developed new ways of doing things. Always be prepared to negotiate. A family is not a military unit.



## The Alcohol Transition



### Restricted Alcohol vs. Available Alcohol

**In Combat:** In the combat theatre, alcohol use was limited.

**At Home:** Alcohol is now plentiful.

**Question:** *Did you prevent a fellow Soldier from drinking too much and/or driving after drinking?*

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Soldiers tell us all the time, that the first thing they are going to do when they return from a deployment is get drunk. But this is a bad plan. Excessive alcohol use after deployment actually makes the transition worse.

**Action:** Pace yourself. Don't drink and drive. Don't drink if you are feeling lonely or depressed. Don't drink if you're having trouble sleeping; it actually makes the sleep worse! Don't encourage each other to get drunk. Look out for each other.





## The Alcohol Transition



### The Transition

*Many Soldiers use alcohol as a way to cope with deployment experiences, but this is not healthy. Learn to relax without using alcohol.*

### Battlemind Check (self & buddy)

- Using alcohol to calm down?
- Using alcohol to help you sleep?
- Others telling you that you're drinking too much?

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**[Key concept]:** Excessive alcohol use requires help. If alcohol is being used to get to sleep, cope with deployment experiences or current work or relationship problems, or there are alcohol related incidents, or drinking and driving, you need to get some help.

Pace yourself. Don't drink and drive. Don't drink if you are feeling lonely or depressed. Don't drink if you're having trouble sleeping; it actually makes the sleep worse! Don't encourage each other to get drunk. Look out for each other.



## **The 5 Myths of Mental Health**

**A myth is something people believe,  
but it isn't true.**

**For all leaders, it is your responsibility to  
fight these myths.**

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I want to conclude by addressing 5 myths about mental health that many Soldiers believe.

A myth is false. It isn't true.

Leaders are critical here, team leaders, squad leaders, platoon sergeants, First Sergeants, and officers. ALL OF YOU NEED TO FIGHT THESE MYTHS.



## Myths and Facts of Mental Health



**Myth 1. Only weak Soldiers have mental health problems.**

**Fact: Everyone is affected by combat.**

**Myth 2. If a Soldier has a problem, he/she will get help.**

**Fact: Most Soldiers don't get help because of stigma.**

**Myth 3. A fellow Soldier's mental health problems are none of my business.**

**Fact: Soldiers most often turn to other Soldiers when they need help. Leaders are responsible for helping Soldiers.**

**Myth 4. The Army doesn't support Soldiers who have mental health problems.**

**Fact: There are multiple ways to get help.**

**Myth 5. No one can help me if I have a mental health problem.**

**Fact: Professional treatment helps, the earlier the better.**

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None of these myths are true. It is the responsibility of all leaders to fight these perceptions and encourage Soldiers to get the help they need.

**Notes for Myth 1/Fact 1:** Combat often leads to mental health effects. Although everyone is affected by combat, about one-third of Soldiers may need help. 10-20% of Soldiers have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), 20-30% have alcohol or aggression problems, and 20% have marital problems.

How many of you know who Audie Murphy is? Who has heard of the Audie Murphy Club. Audie Murphy was the most decorated Soldier from World War II. He won the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and he was injured twice. He too suffered from post-traumatic disease disorder (PTSD), before there was even a post-traumatic stress disorder, and he had problems transitioning home. Audie Murphy encouraged all Soldiers to get help when they wanted it or needed it. The key is that performance in combat is not related to whether you will or won't have a battlemind injury.

**Notes for Myth 2/Fact 2:** Soldiers are often concerned that they will be seen as weak, that their unit leaders will treat them differently, or that their career will be harmed if they get help. Most Soldiers with mental health problems don't get help. For these reasons, buddies and leaders must ensure that a Soldier who needs help receives it.

**Notes for Myth 3/Fact 3:** Since Soldiers turn to other Soldiers for help, you need to always be prepared to help them. This includes encouraging them to get help and knowing where and how to get help.

**Notes for Myth 4/Fact 4:** [See next slide.]

**Notes for Myth 5/Fact 5:** The earlier Soldiers seeks help for a mental health problem, the quicker they will feel better, and the less likely the problems will harm their career or relationships.



## Mental Health Resources



The Army has established numerous ways for Soldiers and Families to get help for mental health issues:

Buddies/ Leaders

Chaplain/ Troop Medical Clinic/ Mental/Behavioral Health Services

Off-post Mental Health professional/ Army/ Military One Source: 1-800-342-9647; [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)

Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospitals/Clinics

VA Vet Centers

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There are numerous ways to get help.

The first line of support are buddies and first line supervisors who should support Soldiers getting help.

The most important resources for getting help are your unit chaplain, troop medical clinic and the mental and behavioral health services. Many of these professionals have deployed themselves and they understand the problems Soldiers face.

There are VA hospitals and clinics in many cities, and VA Vet Centers located within 50 miles of most Soldiers' homes.

The Army One Source is another resource for you, your spouse and/or children, particularly for relationship problems. The Army One Source provides up to 6 free counseling sessions per problem. This help is confidential, they don't tell your chain of command that you are being seen, and this help will not appear in your military records. The Army has already paid for it whether you use it or not.

Audie Murphy knew that most Soldiers who needed or wanted help wouldn't get it. Many Soldiers with mental health problems believe that no one can help them. That it is up to them to fix any problem they have. Audie Murphy thought that too, but he admitted that he was wrong. That no matter how brave he was in combat, no matter how well he performed, he knew he needed help. He knew he had a problem that he couldn't solve on his own. It took courage for him to ask for help.



## Summary



### B A T T L E M I N D

- Adapt your **Battlemind** skills to facilitate your transition home. Build on your strengths.
- If you need or want help, get it. Overcome the myths of mental health.
- It takes courage to ask for help and it takes leadership to help a fellow Soldier get help.

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All Soldiers returning from combat must learn to adapt their Battlemind skills so that they can be just effective at home as they were in combat. All Soldiers must learn not to respond at home the way they did in combat because if they do, they could get into trouble. You can do this by building on your proven strengths.

Avoid the myths of mental health. Soldiers won't always get help if they need it. And mental health professionals can help. Leaders at every level, team, squad, platoon, and company, must work to educate their subordinates and each other about these myths and about the facts of mental health.

Remember, "It takes courage to ask for help, and it takes leadership to help a fellow Soldier get help."



# THANK YOU!

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This presentation contains a combination of research findings and recommendations, many of which are based on personal observations and experiences. Therefore, the opinions and views expressed here are those of the Land Combat Study Team, and should not be considered representing the U.S. Army or the Department of Defense.

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How many of you have heard freedom isn't free?

Freedom is free for most Americans. But not for you all. Everyone of you has made serving your country a personal priority and you've made the sacrifices. Most American's won't make that sacrifice. So be proud of your service.

Thank You for your service!

[hand out brochures]

**Please send comments and suggestions for improving this brief to LTC Carl A. Castro (301-319-9174), [carl.castro@us.army.mil](mailto:carl.castro@us.army.mil). Thanks to COL Charles Hoge and the WRAIR Land Combat Study Team for their assistance in the development and validation of this training material, and the VA Puget Sound Deployment Health Clinic for review.**